



LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

County of Los Angeles
Sheriff's Department Headquarters
4700 Ramona Boulevard
Monterey Park, California 91754-2169



March 4, 2005

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**RESPONSE TO BOARD MOTION REQUEST ON DISCHARGE
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE HOMELESS**

On January 4, 2005, your Board directed the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to report back on current discharge policies and procedures, which ensure that persons are discharged to appropriate housing situations and linked to services as needed. Your Board also directed to report any barriers to successful implementation of these policies and procedures.

The Sheriff's Department begins its process of assessing for homelessness during the booking and classification of inmates at the Inmate Reception Center (IRC). A representative from the Department's Community Transition Unit (CTU) conducts outreach to offer services to inmates who are homeless. According to Title 15 requirements, services must be offered, but are not mandated.

The Department currently has the following services and/or policies and procedures in place for a successful transition from custody back into the community:

In-Court Release Program

The In-Court Release Program began in May 2001. An average of 1,500 inmates appear in court on a daily basis. Approximately 10 percent, or 150 (3,000 per month), are released directly from the court residing in the jurisdiction of the inmate's arrest. Inmates do not return to IRC for processing. Bus tokens, taxi vouchers, etc., are provided to inmates who request them and show a need.

A Tradition of Service

Community Transition Unit

In 1999, the Department embarked on a vision to create a seamless transition of inmates from custody to the community; the result was the CTU. Inmates requesting services are assessed for needs. The Department's custody assistants assigned to CTU provide comprehensive case management. Areas most requested for assistance include: housing, employment, drug and alcohol treatment, domestic violence, shelter, HIV/AIDS services, veteran's services, medical services, and child care. Eighteen (18) case managers are assigned to the program and handle up to 50 cases on a regular basis. During the first year of operation, CTU spent extensive hours saturating the public and communities throughout Los Angeles County on their responsibilities.

Other Transitioning Services

- The Sheriff oversees the Inmate Welfare Fund, which provides services and supplies for the benefit and welfare of the inmates housed in the Los Angeles County jails.
- Friends Outside provides case management and transitional services to inmates on contract with the Inmate Welfare Commission.
- The Veterans Administration provides outreach and case management to military veterans.
- The Salvation Army provides case management, job training, and life skills to military veterans.
- The Volunteers of America (VOA) and The Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents provide Proposition 10 services for pregnant and parenting women in custody. Their services extend to the children living in the community.
- The VOA provides a van, four times a day, to transport those released inmates to scheduled appointments for services throughout the County. If no appointments have been made, the inmates are transported to the VOA drop-in center, where they are assessed and placed in appropriate programs.
- The VOA operates the GRACE Project in the jails. This program assists inmates, diagnosed with a chronic medical condition, with transitional services. The VOA also assigns a staff member to the release area of IRC. This staff member directs released inmates in need of services to assistance programs. Assistance includes providing a contact list for services, making phone calls on behalf of the inmate, or directing them to the VOA shuttle outside the release area.

- The VOA receives federal funds to provide transitional services to incarcerated U.S. military veterans through the Incarcerated Veteran's Reentry Project.
- The IMPACT Drug Treatment Program provides a residential drug and alcohol treatment program in the jail. Case managers manage the inmates while in custody and provides supportive services to released individuals. These individuals are placed in either a 12 or 18-month community-based drug court program.
- The Department has partnered with the office of AIDS Programs and Policy to provide case management and transitional services for HIV positive inmates. Case managers are placed at each jail facility.
- The Palms Residential Care, which has partnered with the Department, parks a large treatment-based mobile unit near the release area of IRC. This project allows anyone being released to seek immediate services upon release (with the focus of getting them to test for HIV). Any HIV positive individual can be provided immediate services related to their condition, i.e., medical services, social services, housing, etc.
- The Correctional Services Division operates the Religious and Volunteer Services Unit where more than 1,200 volunteers provide 12-step meetings, religious services, etc. In addition, the Department is informed on a regular basis of their efforts to transition inmates directly from custody to recovery homes or religious-based programs.
- The Passport to Learning Program is provided to developmentally disabled inmates. This program includes transitional services for inmate participants.
- The Department of Mental Health operates within the Twin Towers Correctional Facility. They provide treatment, case management, and follow-up services with the nearly 2,000 mentally ill offenders in our custody.

All of the above mentioned service providers have a tremendous effect on the number of people who are perceived as being "dumped" out of custody. Collectively, each service provider works with over 100 individuals per month. Coupled with the CTU and the Court Release Program, it appears that nearly 5,000 inmates are being diverted from the streets of downtown Los Angeles and into some type of service or program in the community. All of these service providers assisting with case management understand that housing is the greatest unmet need in the County.

One of the biggest obstacles for transitioning individuals from custody who are homeless is the lack of available housing in the County. The Stuart McKinney Act does not provide funding or services for anyone who has not been homeless for 24 hours (jail

or incarceration is not considered homeless). Finding appropriate housing is difficult. Many released inmates transition directly to emergency shelters, where often contact is lost.

If you have any additional questions regarding the Sheriff's Department's discharge planning, please contact me or Chief Charles M. Jackson of Correctional Services Division, at (213) 893-5017.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leroy D. Baca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LEROY D. BACA
SHERIFF